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The Assurance of Faith; or, the Experience of a True Christian.

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE

OF A

DISCOURSE

Delivered at

GLENEVY in the County of ANTRIM in IRELAND,

In the YEAR 1754.

By *JOHN CENNICK.*

Let us draw near with full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water, HEB. X. 22.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by M. LEWIS, in Paternoster-Row, near Cheapside. 1756.

ISAIAH XXXviii. 17.

Thou haſt in Love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of Corruption, for thou haſt caſt all my Sins behind thy Back.

THESE Words are a Part of that Writing which *Hezekiah* the good King of *Iſrael* wrote after a Recovery from Sickneſs, and is a Sort of a Song of Thankſgiving, and a Relation of his happy Experience, *viz.* of his own natural Eſtate, and of the Work of Converſion on his Heart.

I prize this Portion of holy Scripture the more, becauſe under the Law, the Believer generally walked in a Cloud, and but few ſeemed permitted to look behind the Vail, and to experience the Bleſſedneſs which through the Goſpel is every Child of *God*'s proper Right and Priviledge.

From *Moſes* until *Chriſt*, *that Veil which was upon all Nations* darkened the *Iſraelites* alſo, and in great Meaſure overſhadowed the whole Church of *God* which was among the *Jews*; and only a ſmall Number of choice and choſen Men and Women, ſuch as the Prophets, and those who believed their

Report, had true Ideas of the Kingdom and Redemption of *Him that should come*; and hence it was that the Prophets who spoke plainly of *Christ*, and who having *searched diligently, and found out the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow*, in a Sort of Ecstacy and Rapture uttered the glad News, were as coldly received, and often, if not always, the most persecuted and most despised of their Time.

The Truth was, they could not relish the Testimony of the Men inspired, but liked rather to hear of being the greatest People in the World, to be prospered in all their Wars, to be rich, to reign, to enjoy a Flow of Milk and Honey, and to abound in all Plenty, and to have Kings among themselves whose Dominion should have no End, and to see all the Heathen Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water to them. They loved this World, and erred in their Hearts about the World to come; and this made their chief Minister sigh over them, when he was finishing his Course, *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End.* They were, as too many of us are, fond of Things temporal, and careless of Things eternal; Lovers of the Shadows, but thoughtless and inadvertent in the Substance.

But stiff-necked and disobedient as they were, there were among them in all Ages, Men, who like *Hezekiah*, sought after the best Riches, and who followed the Example of their Fathers, *counting themselves in the World Strangers and Pilgrims, and looking for a heavenly Country and a City that has Foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.*

These

These sought and found the *Lord*: These received the Remission of their Sins, and their Songs of Praise are often filled with Expressions of *the Assurance of Faith*. These abound among the Psalms, which however collected by *the sweet Singer of Israel*, are not his alone, but the Work of many Saints who with him partook of the same Faith, and were illuminated by the same Paraclete and Comforter.

It is easy to prove out of the Psalms of *David* and others, as well as out of *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, that they who believed truly in *our Saviour*, though so far off, knew their Sins were forgiven and blotted out, to be remembered no more; and this Grace they prophesied should come unto us: But there is something particularly beautiful in that Writing of *Hezekiah*, out of which I have been reading. It is to me a solid and weighty Account of *God's* Dealings with him, and tally's with the Experience of all *true Christians* in the World.

Three Things are particularly to be observed in his Relation.

First, The Distress he was in before *our Saviour* spoke Peace to him and delivered him from his Sins.

Secondly, The Assurance he had of being pardoned, and accepted by his *heavenly Father*, and saved; and how boldly he testifies that this must be the Case with all *the Children of God*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Cause of all; which, he says, was the Love of *Jehovah* to him: of each of these, let me speak a little.

And *First*, I will mention his Distress. He was outwardly troubled with Sickness, and within with Fears, and Heaviness: He wept sore for Fear of dying, and was in Bitterness about his Peace with *God*. He expected every Morning to be cut off, through a grievous Boil that caused his Illness; and every Evening he dreaded more than meeting a Lion, that the *Lord* would remove him, while a more heavy Burden lay on his Heart; for he doubted if he should ever see the *Lord* in the Land of the Living. There are few Lovers of *Jesus* who read this pathetic Writing, but with Tears in their Eyes think, *Ah dear Saviour, so it was with me; thus I thought once; this was my Case. I cried and mourned alone. I sat moping and grieving in secret like a Dove. I seemed to sigh unregarded, like the Swallow that chatters alone on the House-top. I was in Pain for a Saviour; I mourned for Him as one mourneth for his only Son. I was in Bitterness for Him whom I had pierced, as one is in Bitterness for his First-born.*

Thus it was with poor *Hezekiah*; nor was he comforted till the *Lord* pitied him, and saw his Tears, and sent Mercy and Pardon to him. O this was a happy Sickness, a sanctified Visitation! For this little Moment's Affliction he shall thank the *Lamb* to all Eternity. It was grievous for a few Days, but had the desired Effect, and helped lay him low at the Throne of Grace; and now behold

behold he who turned to the Wall upon his Bed and wept, he who dreaded to be consumed, and expected daily when the *Lord* wou'd make an end of him, is now in Peace. He has found a merciful *Saviour*, and is with him; he once trembled to think he should behold Men no more, and be no more with the Inhabitants of the World; now he sees *the Son of Man*, and is with the Inhabitants of the World above. O that Sickness might thus be blessed to all those who pine away with it! They have much Time, and are released from the Employments and hurrying Business of this Life, O that they would turn to him *who himself bore their Sicknesses and carried their Infirmities*, and pray him to help them to the Place where Sickness, Sorrow and Pain, is no more, and where all Tears are wiped away from their Eyes. They may have many or few to comfort them with Hopes of doing well again, recovering their Health, *&c.* but till they have the Assurance of their Part in *Jesus Christ*, they need the *right Comforter*, and are without the *best Friend:* Had they his Presence, then, when none else were near to comfort them, he would be near, and to have him is better than Life, and to die in him is Gain.

It is very common for Persons, before their Assurance of the Love of *Christ*, to be in Misery and sore afflicted. To me it would be a great Proof that a Man was unconverted, who never knew what it was to be so pained at his very Heart, so concern'd about his Soul's future Welfare, that he could not rest or be easy. Such who sleep on and take their Rest, and never experience that Distress, which *our Saviour* calls *Hungering and Thirsting*,

ing, being weary and heavy laden, being ready to perish, &c. were never awakened, they are in a carnal Security and dead to the *divine Life*, dead to the *Faith*, dead to the *Lord*, and to their own Souls. They deserve that Character in the Prophet, *Careless and at Ease in Sion.* But tho' in general *Children of God* in this Sense *through much Tribulation enter the Kingdom*; yet there are Instances of some who have been so drawn by Love, and carried so like Lambs in the Shepherd's Bosom, that they are excused from much Pain, and saved from many Sorrows; yet altogether are they not Strangers to that Heart-uneasiness which I have been speaking about. Many have therefore called it the *Pangs of the New Birth*, and *our Saviour* himself so compares it, *John* [xvi. 20.]

Who can forbear to be uneasy when the *Holy Spirit* awakes him from his dangerous Sleep, shews him his wicked Heart and Life, sets before him in Order his Sins, and how great Wrath he justly deserves? Who, unregenerate and conscious of his being a natural and carnal Man, can do otherwise than shudder when he knows he must die, and after that come to Judgment; and when he feels that if he should be called away as he is, he must perish in eternal Burnings, and be numbered among *foolish Virgins*, Hypocrites and Unbelievers? But what can pierce still deeper and cut with more intense Pain, is the conviction that we have slighted Christ, slighted and disesteemed his Person and Merits, his Sufferings and Blood, his Shame and Humiliation, his Labour and Servitude, and, as it were, trampled under Foot the holy Things wherewith he redeemed us; besides denying and refusing the tender Calls

of

of his *Spirit*, and rejecting his Convictions. These Reflections, when the Eyes of the Soul are opened, cause inexpressible Sadness and Grief. These make the Heart sink, and the Tears flow Day and Night, this makes the Stoutest tremble and sigh, nor can all the World cure them whose Eyes *God* has thus enlightened.

In the same Manner when he has touched those deaf Ears *which refused to hear the Voice of the Charmer*, and said *Ephatha*, they no more listen to the Scriptures with a cold untouched or unaffected Heart, but the Thunders of *Mount Sinai* make the Marrow in their Bones quake; and then often betwixt *Satan* who labours hard to disturb, discourage and perplex them, carnal Friends with their threatenings and Promises, false Teachers with their smooth Doctrines and Self-righteousness, and their own more false and deceitful Hearts, they are overwhelmed with Trouble and Confusion, and for Fear, least amidst all those Dangers they should lose eternal Life, they are brought to the very sharpest Pain, and deepest Distress. An unusual Thoughtfulness makes them heavy, and Temptations and many groundless Suggestions dishearten them to the last Degree, but all this in the End makes them resolve to cast themselves down before our dear *Saviour's* Feet with this Determination, *If I perish, I will perish there.*

Souls in this Case are to be pitied, but they are safe, they are in good Hands; he who sweat Blood in his Agony knows the right Time to help, and he who brought them to the Birth, will surely give Strength to bring forth. Nor can I believe a Soul

who ſincerely wants Salvation, and who more than all Things dreads being parted from our *Saviour* or his Love, will periſh; they may have many Fears, but he will deliver them out of all. Who reads the Pſalms which were the Experience of *David* and others under the Old Teſtament, and who thinks only on the Reaſon why *Paul*, after he was ſo ſhocked at his Entry into *Damaſcus*, could neither eat or drink for three Days and Nights, but continued praying, will not be ſurpriſed if a Soul in our Time ſhould be ſo broken and caſt down under a Senſe of his Sin and Want of *Jeſus*. The Behaviour of *Mary*, the *Thief*, thoſe who were pricked to the Heart under *Peter*'s Diſcourſe at *Pentecoſt*, the *Jailor* at *Philippi*, and many others are only Inſtances of this Kind; and as I ſaid before, *Hezekiah* is far from being the only Perſon who fell under ſuch a Concern, as made him expreſs the Language of his Heart in ſuch a Manner; for all the *Children of God* drink of it. *Jeſus* has drank up the Dregs. He has taken the bitter Draught, the Wormwood and the Gall, and he lets us pledge him.

It is both ſafe, and alſo an Honour to us that we have thus been tried. Safe, becauſe when Souls are thus ſtripped of all their falſe Hopes, their legal Righteouſneſs, and fancied Goodneſs, they ſee, feel, and are aſſured of their own Vileneſs, Inability, and loſt Eſtate; and are divinely aſſured that they muſt periſh for ever and ever, unleſs *Jeſus* out of free Mercy and mere Pity and Compaſſion ſhould help them. They are, as it were, *in the deep Mire and Clay*, *in the Shadow of Death*, on the Verge and Brink of Hell, and know, nothing leſs than a

Miracle

Miracle of Grace can deliver them. This is safe for them; for thus does the *Holy Ghost* do with them, to bring them off entirely from all Self-goodness, and from every Hope from Angels and Men, to fly to the Cross as poor, guilty, condemned and Hell-deserving Wretches, at whose Heels the Avenger of Blood pursues with all his Terrors. This is safe for them when they have found Mercy, for they are saved from *ascribing any Thing to their own Deservings*, and to their own Merits; they know, they remember well (when a Self-righteous Thought rises, or any Thing that would be self-admiring, or self-pleasing stirs) what a lamentable, helpless and ruin'd Condition they were in, when *Jesus* saw their Tears, heard their Cries, had Pity on their Pain and delivered them; and this makes them thank, and adore, and love him, *on whose Head are many Crowns*, and with Shame and deepest Gratitude they lay all the Glory of their Salvation and Happiness at his Feet, *who only is worthy to receive Blessing and Thanksgiving, because he was slain.*

It is an Honour; for thereby we taste a Little, we sip of the Cup which he drank, and can guess, with some Justness, what our *dear Lord* felt, *when the Sins of all were laid on him.* We do not really taste the Wrath of *God*, nor the Punishment; for that the *Lamb* took on himself and bore alone; but what we experience is in Apprehension, and is somewhat of that Distress and Amazement which *Jesus* shared so powerfully when he foresaw what he must undergo for his poor People, when the Cup ready mixt was held out, and when his Sweat was like Blood.

This

This alſo learns us to prize the Redemption. We reflect, with eternal Joy, *From what a Death has he delivered us!*

There is, at the ſame Time, a Danger in this awakened State, of which I have been treating. A Soul can value itſelf on Account of what it has ſuſtained, and deſpiſe them who have not been tried in the ſame Way, or who have not ſo long laboured in the Fire. This is from the old Root of Self-righteouſneſs, and is unſeemly in the Eyes of *Jeſus*, and odious in the Sight of a Soul truly converted.

Very often the Stubborneſs of a Soul, the being loath to part with all its own Holineſs, its Hardneſs of Heart, and falſe Knowledge, cauſes it much Trouble, and creates it much unneceſſary Uneaſineſs. Did a Soul directly, on the Sight of its own loſt State, fly to our *Saviour*, and with all Simplicity believe in him, it would eſcape and get out of the Hands of the Adverſary, and before the Spirit of the Law could aſſault, or terrify, or *Satan* tempt, or *the Avenger* reach them, they would get into *the City of Refuge*, and ſo be out of the Reach of all Perplexity. Let then, whoever is troubled in Mind, concerned about being happy, or afraid of miſcarrying, immediately apply to *the Lamb*; they will never be more fit to come to him, than in the Moment they are ſenſible of their Poverty and Sinfulneſs. When is a Man more fit to go to the Surgeon, than when wounded and with his Bones diſlocated and broken? When is a Perſon more fit for the Phyſician, than when exceeding ſick? When

When does the Sinner more need a *Saviour*, than when ready to perish? May every Trouble, every Sickness, every Conviction bring you and me to the Feet of *Jesus Christ!* So it was with *Hezekiah*, when presently his Sickness of Body and Soul took a Turn. He was almost overcome with his Misery, and with his Heart ready to burst, when he cried out, *Lord I am oppressed! Undertake for me.* Our *Saviour* heard, and knew the Time was come to deliver him, and immediately did undertake for him, and released him at once from the Sickness of his Body, and the Sin of his Soul; and thus he does to all Souls in like Distress. When they turn their Faces and Hearts to him, when they have done with all other Hopes, Refuges and Helps, and pray to him alone, one may safely say to such, *Ye are not far from the Kingdom of God.* Ye are nigh to be delivered indeed. Your Salvation slumbereth not, and your Redemption lingereth not.

O if there be any who hear me, who are oppressed, lay hold on the Horns of this Altar, and use *Hezekiah*'s availing Prayer, *Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me. I am in a perilous Condition beset on every Side, O take my Part. I am a Debtor, undertake for me; Thou canst free and set me at Liberty, for against thee only I have sinned; and thou Lord, if thou wilt, canst make me clean. I am like a poor Man who has a bad Suit at the Bar, undertake for me. Thou mighty Counsellor advise me, thou Almighty Advocate, plead my Cause, and gain my Suit.* This do out of the Bottom of thy Heart, and thou shalt prove that true of *Jesus: He is a Friend of Publicans and Sinners.*

But

But now it is Time, that I ſpeak on the *Second* Thing remarkable in *Hezekiah*'s Writing, and that is, the Aſſurance he had of his being pardoned and forgiven.

Behold (he ſays) *for Peace, I had great Bitterneſs: but thou haſt, in Love to my Soul, caſt all my Sins behind thy Back.* This is generally the Language of a pardoned and accepted Sinner. This is the joyful Sound of them that come to Chriſt. This is the Right and Privilege of every Believer in *Jeſus.*

Let who will oppoſe this comfortable Doctrine, it is true, and all that ſeek ſhall find it ſo; and they who oppoſe and contradict it, ſpeak againſt *the Oracles of God*, and the Experience of his Children. Unbelief has invented all the fallacious and deluſive Arguments againſt *the Aſſurance of Faith*; and becauſe the far greateſt Part of Mankind are void of this excellent Gift, therefore thoſe who wou'd fain be accounted *true Chriſtians*, who have it not, are on the ſtrongeſt Side, and have the Advantage of all the carnal and plauſible Reaſons for their being ſafe, though ignorant of it; but they have no Ground in the Scriptures. Theſe are ſwift Witneſſes againſt ſuch as plead for walking in Darkneſs, not knowing whither they are going. *Let us draw near*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with full Aſſurance of Faith.* Another Apoſtle exhorts the Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity to make their Calling and Election ſure.* And *John* ſays, *that all the Scriptures are written that Men might believe on the Name of the Son of God, and have eternal Life through his Name, and that they might know that they had eternal Life.* This is the Nature of Faith; it is itſelf *the Evidence of Things unſeen,*

unseen, it is the Substance of a hoped for Heaven and eternal Glory; it has always with it *the eternal Life which is in Jesus Christ. All my People, saith the Lord, shall know me. We know him that is true. We know that when this earthly House is dissolved, we have a House with God eternal in the Heavens. I am persuaded, nothing shall separate us from the Love of God. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself.* But why need I rehearse so many Scriptures, since all aim at nothing less than that the believing Soul might be happy here and hereafter? To ascertain this to the Faithful the *Holy Ghost* is given, that *he might comfort the Children of God, shew them the Things of Christ, glorify him, and dwell in them for ever. He beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God. He leads into all Truth, he reveals the good Things to us which the Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard. He sheds abroad the Love of God, seals to the Day of Redemption, and is the Earnest of our everlasting Inheritance.*

The Prophets and Apostles would have been but poorly off, if they had not been assured of being happy for ever. *The primitive Christians* would have had also but little Encouragment to attempt the Conversion of the *Heathen*, if there had been no more Certainty of eternal Happiness in *true Christianity*, than in the strict moral Life of a *Heathen*; nor could the Martyrs, in all Ages, have met Death so chearfully and with Songs of Joy, if they had not had the *Assurance of Faith*, and thereby enjoyed *Christ*'s Love in them. But they had it, and every true Believer has it also. Some Insincerity at the Bottom, some darling Sin, or cherished Unbelief hinders all who have it not. It is a

great Gift, but not too great for him that beſtows it. It is worthy of its Giver. It is the Way *in which he manifeſts himſelf to his Children, as he does not unto the World*; and muſt be ſought for, for it is *the hidden Treaſure, it is what no Man knoweth ſaving him that receiveth it.*

A truly poor Sinner does not aſk, how is it poſſible? How can this be? But becauſe *Jeſus* has promiſed it, he believes, and ſeeks and finds it; while one, who has much Knowledge in his Head, thinks he has attained Something great, and ſettles upon his Lees, with his Heart ſtill among the Fearful and Unbelieving. Thoſe above all others are to be blamed, who hinder Souls to preſs after this Bleſſedneſs. Surely they have it not themſelves, for did they enjoy it, they would be eager to have all their Hearers enjoy the ſame precious Faith; but therein they ſhew how unwilling they are to think themſelves miſtaken, and unconverted. Surely *they love Darkneſs rather than Light*, and don't want to be undeceived, *but are the Blind leaders of the Blind.*

When they ſay, *No one in this Life can know our* Saviour, *or their Sins forgiven*; how have they read the Scriptures? Why! *With Eyes that could not ſee*, and they have heard it *with Ears that could not hear*, and thought thereon *with a Heart that could not underſtand*; for all the Scriptures teach, *that if any Man ſays he has Communion with God, and walks in Darkneſs, he lieth. He that follows Chriſt ſhall not* [*walk*] *in Darkneſs, he ſhall have the Light of Life. He ſhall know whither he goeth, and the Way he ſhall know.*

When

When they ſay, *We can't know 'till we die*; how weak is their Doctrine? For might not they affirm as well, that we ſhould not know then? Who ever came from the Dead to let us hear how it paſſed with them? Or where have the Scriptures taught a Leſſon ſo carnal? If a Believer in *Chriſt* don't know if he ſhall be happy, till he dies, then wherein does excel our holy Faith? Or why is it preferable to that of the *Turks*, or the Worſhipers of *Confucius?* They who are ſincere among theſe, hope they ſhall be happy, but don't know it; and if we did not know, we and our Religion are on a Level with them and their Darkneſs.

O adored be the *Lamb*, who is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* in this benighted World! And who does not leave his Flock like bewildered Sheep, but is with them, dwells with them, and in them, comforts them, is found of them, manifeſts himſelf to them, and gives them to know him.

Should he forgive us only then [when] we depart, he would loſe his Glory; for we could not praiſe him to others, nor tell to his Honour what he had done for us; and therefore, full of Joy, *Hezekiah* breaks out, *The Grave cannot praiſe thee, Death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the Pit cannot hope for thy Truth.* As if he would have ſaid, ſhould Men not know thy Forgiveneſs till Death, then they could not praiſe thee before their Children, nor tell of their experiencing thy Grace and Mercy. When once the Body is laid to reſt in the Grave, it is too late to expect it to celebrate thy Praiſes. They that go to the Tomb, cannot relate thy

Mercies, nor can they, who venture into Eternity without thy Pardon, hope for thy Truth; *but the Living, the Living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I To-day*; *he* ſhall tell his *believing Friends*, his Neighbours, *O come hither, and hearken, and I will declare what God has done for my Soul.* I was once in a poor Way, I was *in Bitterneſs for want of Peace with God my Saviour*, and lo! *out of Love to my Soul, he has caſt all my Sins behind his Back.* Thus, he ſays, *the Father ſhall make known thy Truth to his Children*; he ſhall tell them, I am a Witneſs, my Sons, my Daughters, *that Salvation is in the Lord*; I have found it, I have ſought his Mercy and experienced it in my Heart, and therefore can lay my grey Hairs with Joy in the Grave.

O dear People! don't dream of Enjoyments after Death, who have been ſo negligent of your Intereſt in our *Saviour*, now in your Life-time, as not to inſure to yourſelves his Love and Forgiveneſs. Don't fancy Death, and after Death, is the only right Time to know his Salvation: *the Living, the Living, he ſhall praiſe him*, as *Hezekiah* did. Now is the right Time to be aſſured that you ſhall go to Heaven. *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.*

Only *the Aſſurance of Faith* renders this Life happy and comfortable; and at the ſame Time entirely aboliſhes the Fear of Death and Hell, and creates the trueſt Love and Thankfulneſs to *our Saviour*. As for ſuch who wantonly and wildly confeſs, *If they knew they ſhould be ſaved, they would live in all Manner of Sins*; let them know, as long as they are in that Mind, they ſhall never have it, nor

nor Heaven neither. They are on *Satan's* Side, and willing Servants of Sin.

A Soul who has found this Bleſſedneſs of Faith, has far other Thoughts. He loves our Saviour too dearly to grieve him, and prizes his dear-bought Happineſs too much, to forfeit the Enjoyment of it one Hour for all the World. Would to *God* all who name the Name of *Jeſus*, knew *this Faith!* the Earth would be a nether Heaven and Paradiſe.

One walking in the Aſſurance of Faith with Humility and real Poverty of Spirit, which always accompany it, not only has Peace in Reſpect of the Confidence he has of being accepted of *his heavenly Father, through his beloved Son Jeſus*; but *he walks with God as Enoch and Noah did*; he has (to uſe the New Teſtament Language) *Communion and Fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*, and can ſpeak to his dear *Saviour* as a Child to his Father, and *as a Man talketh with his Friend*, ſo he converſes, by Prayer, continually with his *Lord*; and is familiar and intimate with *God*, who made and loved him beyond all he could ever aſk or wiſh. He knows his *Redeemer*, he is acquainted with *God, and at Peace with him:* an eternal Covenant of Peace is made, and in Force between him and *the Lamb*; the Mountains may depart, and the Hills be carried into the Deep of the Sea, but *the Covenant of Peace*, which *the Lamb of God* has eſtabliſhed with him, ſhall not be removed, World without End; nor will our Saviour be angry with him any more, nor will he leave or forſake him, but

but *the Ark of his Presence* shall dwell with him, and he will be with him going out and coming in, and in all Troubles, in all Company, in all Countries and Places the *Lord* himself will comfort him and give him Rest. The Dread of endless Death, the Gnawings of a guilty Conscience, and the Terrors of Judgment to come and Eternity, vanish out of his Heart; *the Death of Christ* has devoured up all other Deaths, and his Misery and Pain has swallowed up and devoured all Curses and Dangers, so that *the Peace of God, Jesus Christ's own Peace*, and that which he has had from Everlasting, rules in him; and *he trusts in the Lord, and is not afraid.* For, whom can he fear? because of what should he tremble? the *Mighty God of Jacob*, the Omnipotent *King of Saints*, the *Lord of Hell and Death* is on his Side! He has forgiven him; *Who can lay to his Charge, or impute Folly to him? The Blood of the Lamb* has washed him so white, that he, who could see *no Iniquity in Jacob, nor behold Perverseness in Israel*, looks on him as *fair, altogether fair, and without Spot.* Thus does he live blessed, and *in the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.* Thus *he dwells safely alone*, and enjoys *the Kingdom of God within himself*; while the noisy World are clamouring without; and the nominal *Christians*, and such as are not upright and sincere, through Unbelief in *Jesus*, go unhappy, and miss the Enjoyment of *the unsearchable Riches of Christ*, and his Presence and Love in this World. This is the Happiness of *a Disciple of Christ.* Of this I am a Witness; and *thus shall it be done to the Man whom the King delights to honour. Such Honour have all his Saints.*

Such

Such can ſay to enquiring Souls, *whoſe Faces are toward Sion*, I am the Man, who have been, of all others, a Sinner. I have lived careleſs and miſtaken in the World, *dead to God while I lived:* but after I was awakened by *the Voice of my Beloved*, I ſought him with Tears, and with a Heart ready to break. I lay down in Sorrow, and roſe oppreſſed; nor could eat or drink in Peace, but was always ſighing for Mercy, till *the Lord* ſhewed me Mercy, and manifeſted himſelf to me; and now *I have found him whom my Soul loveth.* I have my Eyes open to his Love; *I have found the Lord!* I now live to him, and he lives in me. *I am his, and he is mine.*

But ſhould it be aſked, is there then no Danger of loſing this Happineſs? Can a Perſon, who has Faith, ſin no more? Yes verily, there is Danger; for pardoned and beloved as the Believer may be, yet he is a Sinner, and will carry his old ſpoiled Nature of Fleſh and Blood to the Grave. He muſt be as a Centinel watching over it and its dead Fruits; for though he has *a new Heart and a new Spirit*, he has a ſinful Body, in which riſe and ſtir *the Motions of Sin*, and which nothing can damp or overcome but *the Sprinkling of the Blood of Chriſt.* This keeps the Soul low and aſhamed, and obliges him to live a Sort of Life like Martyrdom; he feels Deſires and Luſts which muſt be crucified, and however they may be natural, and not ſo abominable in their firſt Motions, yet they muſt be denied and mortified; *They war againſt the Soul*, and are contrary to the chaſt Nature of the Virgin-like Spouſe to whom the Believer is wedded. All Acts

of

of Careleſſneſs, and eſpecially any Thing of Diſobedience, and refuſing or not heeding the tender Rebukes and Warnings of the *Holy Spirit*, lead into Darkneſs: And when an Unfaithfulneſs is allowed but a Moment, it brings a Cloud and Veil over the Sanctuary. This, Experience, as well as Scripture, teaches the *Chriſtian*, and therefore, like *David*, he finds it *good to hold faſt by the Lord*. He continues with *Jeſus*, and will not ſtir from his Croſs and crucified Perſon. It is his ſtrong Hold, his Fortreſs and Safe-guard, his only Refuge in any Danger, his only ſecure Place.

If a pardoned and abſolved Perſon ſhould venture into any Sort of unlawful Love, unjuſt Behaviour, worldly and carnal Pleaſures, he muſt not wonder if his tender Father *viſits his Offences with a Rod, and his Sin with Scourges:* or ſhould Selfiſhneſs, Pride, one's own Righteouſneſs or the like be indulged, he will ſenſibly feel a Withdrawing of the powerful Preſence of our *Saviour*; and to perceive the Heart cold toward him, or be conſcious of an Indifference to his Merits, or to find any Thing ſeparate, though but for a little, between the *Lamb* and him, is worſe to the Soul than Death, and far, far more to be dreaded by the *ſincere Chriſtian* and true Convert.

As none can rightly gueſs at his Happineſs, who is aſſured of his Part and Intereſt in *Chriſt*, but him who has the ſame; ſo none but one in his Caſe, can be capable of thinking what Pain that Heart can feel who has backſlidden from its firſt Love, and forfeited the ſweet Company of the *beloved Jeſus*. 'Tis indeed a Heaven upon Earth, to be

be in his Favour, and to Walk with him in Peace; and a nether Hell to feel the *Lord* departed, and withdrawn grieved away. Like as *Mary* was happy and bleſſed at her *Lord*'s Feet, while he ſaid, *Thy Sins, which are many, are Forgiven thee*; and was as miſerable when ſhe could not find him, but thought him taken away, and ſo continued ſeeking and weeping till he appeared to her again: So a faithful Soul is in his right Mind, in his right Place, and would not change States with an Angel, while he feels the *Love of God* which tranſcends and ſurpaſſes Knowledge in his Heart; but weeps Day and Night if he can but imagine he has diſpleaſed the *Saviour*, and can't reſt or be comforted till a-new our *Saviour* ſmiles and viſits him, and reſtores his Peace. Then all his Tears are wiped away, and he learns with a tender Heart *to go and Sin no more.*

But now I muſt ſpeak in the *Third* Place, of the Reaſon and Cauſe of all this Bleſſedneſs; and this is the pure unmerited Love of *our Lord* and *Saviour Jeſus. Out of Love to my Soul, Hezekiah* ſays, *he caſt all my Sins behind his Back.* There can be no other Reaſon aſſigned for it: It could not have been our Righteouſneſs, we have none. It could not have been our Merits; He purchaſed it for us before ever we were born. It is, as I ſaid, Grace, Free Grace; and this is conſtantly taught in the *Bible.*

This ſhould make every poor Heart leap for Joy. For though you have no Goodneſs, no Sort of inherent Claim to this Bliſs, yet are you invited to come and take freely of it; nor need you be

afraid. *Jesus* loves you freely, and though neither himself nor you can see any Thing worth his Notice in you, yet he loves you *with everlasting Love*, and is not willing *that you should perish, but have everlasting Life*. Come then all you that are *poor in Spirit*, you that are self-condemned and guilty, you that are hungry, thirsty, and in Want; yea, you worst of Sinners, Publicans and Harlots, Drunkards and Winebibbers, Sensualists and Rioters! And above all, ye dear Souls, who have sought for Righteousness under the Law, with a troubled Head and Heart; and you that have been awakened to see your own spoiled and corrupted Hearts, [so] that you have lost nearly all Hope and Courage! Come ye to the *Lamb*, and he will ease you; he will undertake for you; he will cast all your Sins behind his Back, and put a new Song in your Mouth, even Praises and Thanksgiving to our *God*. O come boldly and in Faith, nothing doubting. Open your Mouth wide, and he will fill it. Ask any Thing, and he will do it for you. Ask then the Forgiveness of Sins, and to be assured of your eternal Happiness in him, and you shall receive it. So shall you be blessed here and for ever, and safe living and dying. Ye shall be Witnesses of his Love to your Children, and to the rising Generation; and in the *Lord*'s own good Time, ye shall go to him, and see him whom ye love so much here, and be for ever with him. *Amen*.

F I N I S.